**Brave New World Chapter 8 Summary**

* While Lenina and Linda bond with each other inside, Bernard and John are outside talking.
* Bernard is having a hard time dealing with the reality of the Reservation. It baffles him that there could be two such worlds in coexistence.
* He asks John to tell him his whole story, from the very beginning.
* John launches into his life story:
* Little John is lying down in bed with his mom, and she's singing him to sleep. When he wakes up, a man is trying to sleep with his mom. Linda says, "Not with John here," so the man forcibly removes John, locking him in a different room of the house while he has “relations” with Linda.
* He also remembers a dark room with women making blankets. He remembers Linda telling him to play with the other children and her being angry at the people for being such savages.
* There's also a man named Popé who brings mescal (it's like tequila) over to the house and has lots of “relations” with Linda.
* Shortly thereafter, Linda is whipped (literally whipped) by the women in the town because she is sleeping with all their men.
* When John tries to stop them, he is whipped, too. When he tries to comfort his mother later, she hits him because she resents being his mother. In other words, his life sucks completely, it isn't his fault, and there's nothing he can do about it.
* Fortunately, Linda's maternal instinct kicks in and she starts doing mothering things, like actually comforting her son. (Until he gets lice.)
* Mostly, John remembers her telling him all about the "Other Place," (i.e., the world outside of the Reservation), where everything is clean and you can fly whenever you want and you basically have happiness on tap, along with synthetic music, perfumes, and of course narcotics (*soma*).
* But when he isn't hearing these stories from Linda, John is hearing other, very different stories from the children of the Reservation. They talk about their legends and their mythology of Jesus and Heaven. Of course, the two worlds get all mixed up in his mind.
* Linda continues to be a harlot by the standards of the Reservation, and everyone continues to taunt her for it.
* Yet she somehow finds the time to teach John to read. Unfortunately, the only book she has for him to read is *The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo. Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers*.
* The boys always make fun of him because Linda doesn't know how to mend clothes; but John has one thing above them: he can read. He doesn't really know what the book is talking about, but still.
* Linda isn't a great help, since she can't tell him but about chemicals (the topic of the book) as she only worked with embryos.
* But the men of the Pueblo have answers to everything concerning the sky and earth and seeds and a God named Awonawilona.
* And then, when he is about twelve, John gets a book from Popé: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*.
* He opens it and read a passage (which we know to be from *Hamlet*, though the title isn't mentioned) about lying in the rank sweat of a bed in which dirty things are happening.
* Despite the subject matter, John sees that the words are beautiful, so much so "that you cried."
* He compares it to the magic chants of the men in the Reservation, but this is even better because it speaks *to* *him*. He even recognizes that, somehow, these words are about Linda and Popé.
* So of course over the years John comes to hate Popé more and more. He compares him to Iago, the terrible villain of *Othello*. He then makes himself into Prince Hamlet and Popé into the murderous King Claudius, declaring he will kill him while he lies in bed.
* And then, one day, he indeed tries to kill Popé, stabbing him with a knife while Popé is sleeping in bed with Linda.
* Of course, Linda flips out, more because of the blood than anything else. But Popé, who despite suffering a stab wound or two seems to be just fine, calls John "brave" and sends him on his way without so much as a whack.
* Then [we're still in John's story to Bernard, by the way] one day John is fifteen, an old man named Mitsima teaches him how to make things out of clay. He forms a fast friendship with this man, who teaches him more valuable, life-saving skills.
* Next, John recalls a local wedding, which Linda finds to be unnecessary. John, on the other hand, finds it to be upsetting, since he was evidently in love with the bride.
* When he is sixteen, John tries to take part in a coming-of-age ritual with the rest of the young men of the village. But the leaders won't let him, partly because he's white, partly because he's an outsider, partly because his mother is known to have too many “relations” according to the rest of the savages.
* After being refused, John heads outside and ruminates on his three new discoveries: Time, Death, and God. He also quotes *Macbeth* ("To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow"), which is awesome.
* OK, enough storytelling. John ends his tale by saying that he is "alone, always alone," and Bernard basically says, "OMG! Me too!"
* Both men agree that it doesn't matter which world you're in (the "civilized" or the "savage"), if you're different, you're going to be alone.
* John says that when he wasn't allowed to take part in rituals, he would go through the motions by himself. Once he stood against a rock with his arms outstretched – "like Jesus on the cross" – to suffer in the hot sun. Why? Because he thought he should. If he was unhappy for having done something wrong, this was his way of dealing with it.
* Bernard recognizes that, in his world, the way of dealing with it is to take *soma*, but he thinks John's way is better.
* John shows him a scar on his forehead that he received when, particularly exhausted from pretending to be Jesus, he fell over.
* Bernard doesn't feel pity but rather disgust with the visceral physicality of John's wound. Basically, the text says, conditioning has made him squeamish.
* He then asks John to come back to London with him. (that's NOT allowed.)
* John is giddy as a puppy, and wants Linda to come, too. Bernard is less comfortable with this, since Linda is old and overweight and repulsive to him, but he decides he can actually use all that to his advantage.
* John, calmed down a bit, asks Bernard if he remembers "what Miranda says." Bernard doesn't know who Miranda is, so John proceeds to quote from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "O wonder […]. How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! […] O brave new world that has such people in it!"
* Before he can get really excited, John wants to know if Bernard is married to Lenina. When he hears "no," he goes back to being happy.